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SIPDIS  
TELEGRAM

January 20, 2004

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 211 - UNKNOWN)  
TAGS: PREL  
Captions: None  
Subject: UAEG URGES U.S. TO GIVE UN GREATER ROLE, CAUTIONS  
AGAINST PREMATURE ELECTIONS  
Ref: None

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 00211

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: POL  
INFO: ECON RSO AMB DCM P/M

DISSEMINATION: POL  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA  
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY  
CLEARED: DCM:RAALBRIGHT

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3059  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000211

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/NGA AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/14  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: UAEG urges U.S. to give UN greater  
role, cautions against premature  
elections

Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba,  
Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: In separate discussions this week with the Ambassador about current developments in Iraq, de facto Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayed (HbZ) and DMI Director Brigadier Mohammed Saif Al Neyadi urged the United States to allow the UN to play a larger role in Iraq's political transition, expressed support for a multiethnic government, and cautioned about holding elections prematurely. The UAEG had a negative reaction to the appointment of Lakhdar Brahimi as the UN's new

Special Envoy to Iraq. End Summary.

HbZ on the UN's role, calming the Shi'a

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¶2. (C) Deputy Prime Minister and de facto Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamdan bin Zayed (HbZ) told the Ambassador on January 17 that the UN has a very important role to play in Iraq. He urged the United States to work hard to bring the UN into Iraq's political process. The U.S. should not allow Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani and the Shi'a to take advantage of the current situation in Iraq, or to attempt to cause a rift between the U.S. and the UN, he said. All Iraqis need to understand that it is not the U.S. alone that is driving the political transition in Iraq. Iraqis need to understand that the UN supports the U.S., and that the two have a good working relationship, HbZ said. There is global consensus on what needs to happen in the next six to 12 months in Iraq, he added.

¶3. (C) HbZ continued by saying that the UAE was deeply concerned about the possibility of further sectarian conflict in Iraq. The last thing anyone needs now, he said, is to have Sistani issue fatwas against Coalition forces, and have the Shi'a community out into the streets. That would be detrimental to all of our interests in the Gulf, he said. "We don't want a confrontational relationship between the U.S. and Shi'a that brings people out into the streets." HbZ said that bringing the UN into the process would keep the temperature down in the Shi'a community. If the Shi'a see the UN and U.S. working together, they would see that there is no other option, and they would avoid open confrontation by issuing fatwas to pressure the U.S.

Criticism for new UN Special Envoy

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¶4. (C) HbZ was critical about Lakhdar Brahimi's "very questionable" appointment as the SYG's Special Envoy to Baghdad. The UAE does not regard Brahimi as a very reliable person. His main goal in life, according to HbZ, is to get the Nobel Peace price for himself and he sees everything through that prism. The UAE learned firsthand in Afghanistan that Brahimi is a self-promoter. HbZ said Brahimi often used the SYG's name to advance his personal interests.

DMI Director assesses situation on the ground

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¶5. (C) The Ambassador also discussed current events in Iraq with UAE Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) Director, Brigadier Mohamed Saif Al Neyadi. He told the Ambassador that the so-called resistance in Iraq had lost its focus and organizational structure. "We believe these attacks are not well thought out. They have lost their focus and now Iraqis are being killed. This will not sit well with the Iraqi population."

¶6. (C) Al Neyadi said that the UAE believes a multiethnic government is the best course to follow in the future. The majority of the Shi'a population, including Sistani, look to Iran as a model, which Emiratis do not view as a democracy, he said. A balance of all the ethnic and religious groups in a future democratic government is necessary.

¶7. (C) The November 13 agreement between the CPA and the Iraq Governing Council mapping out a plan for Iraqi sovereignty is the best way to move forward, Al Neyadi said. However, open elections at this time are too dangerous for the future of Iraq, particularly when the society is polarized. There are Iraqis from the outside who have a Western vision of the future clashing with insiders who are holding on to the old way of thinking. There are Sunnis who want to bring the Baathists back, and there are Shi'a who want to adopt the Iran model. Al Neyadi said he believes open elections should wait until there has been a development of political parties and political movements that reflect the center of the political spectrum instead of the extreme views. "We believe this will take time. Open elections are too dangerous at the present time," he said.

¶8. (C) Al Neyadi also told the Ambassador that DMI has assets throughout Iraq, from the cities in the south to the regions of the north, as well as in Baghdad. Some are attached to the Red Crescent teams. This comprehensive coverage means DMI has a very good understanding of what's going on inside Iraq.

WAHBA